

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8560

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4182

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OAS, PDIP, EC

SUBJECT: VEINTIMILLA TO HEAD ECUADOR OASGA DELEGATION

1. IN A LAST MINUTE CHANGE NECESSITATED BY THE SERIOUS ILLNESS OF THE DAUGHTER OF AMBASSADOR GALO LEORO, PERMANENT CHIEF OF THE CUADOREAN OAS DELEGATION, HERNAN VEINTIMILLA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, WILL GO TO WASHINGTON TO STAND IN AS THE CHIEF OF THE OASGA DELEGATION. VEINTIMILLA IS ACCOMPANYING FONMIN JOSE AYALA LASSO, WHO WILL STAY FOR THREE OR FOUR DAYS AND WILL ARRIVE TODAY. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT LEORO WILL NOT RETURN UNTIL AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE GA.

2. VEINTIMILLA SPENT SEVEN YEARS AS A MEMBER OF THE ECUADOREAN OAS PERMANENT DELEGATION, 1970-76. HE WAS RETURNED TO QUITO IN 1976 AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. HE BECAME DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, THE NUMBER THREE RANING POSITION IN THE MINISTRY, WHEN AYALA BECAME FOREIGN MINISTER IN JUNE 1977. VEINTIMILLA DURING HIS LAST YEARS IN WASHINGTON HAD A REPUTATION OF BEING ANTAGONISTIC TOWARD THE US AND ESPECIALLY THORNY IN OAS COUNCILS ON RESTRUCTURATION AND THE TRADE ACT. THIS CRITICAL ATTITUDE CARRIED OVER INTO HIS FIRST YEAR BACK IN QUITO WHEN IT WAS QUITE DIFFICULT TO ENGAGE HIM IN ANY BUT THE MOST FORMAL AND

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CONTENTIOUS DIALOGUES ON LAW OF THE SEA, FISHING, AND GEO-SYNCHRONOUS ORBITS, WHICH FELL UNDER HIS JURISDICTION. A RATHER UNEXPECTED METAMORPHASIS OCCURRED WHEN HE ASSUMED HIS PRESENT CHARGE, AND HE BECAME THE STRONGEST PROPONENT WITHIN THE MINISTRY FOR EXPANDED COOPERATION WITH THE US. HE HAS PERHPAS BEEN THE KEY ELEMENT IN THE MINISTRY PROMOTING THE CURRENT WARMTH IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EMBASSY

AND THE MINISTRY. HELPFUL, INFORMATIVE, AND CREATIVE, HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO HELP MOVE ECUADOREAN FOREIGN POLICY FROM ITS PREVIOUS THIRD-WORLD POSTURING A FEW IMPORTANT NOTCHES TOWARD COLLABORATION WITH THE US.

3. VEINTIMILLA'S PRESENCE ON THE DELEGATION WILL SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THE CHANCES OF MAXIMIZING ECUADOREAN COOPERATION AT THE OASGA. ALTHOUGH SOMETIMES OVERLY LEGALISTIC AND A BIT GARRULOUS, WE THINK THAT HE CAN BE VERY USEFUL IN SEARCHING OUT SUBTLE COMPROMISE LANGUAGE ON CONTENTIOUS POINTS OR SEEKING BACKSTAGE SOLUTIONS. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT HE TENDS TO WORK ON TWO LEVELS: THAT OF PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS WHICH MAY BE TORTUOUSLY LEGALISTIC, AND PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WHERE POLITICAL REALITIES ARE RECOGNIZED.

4. WE WOULD BE EVEN MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR FULLER ECUADOREAN COOPERATION WITH THE USG AT THE OASGA IF IT WERE NOT FOR OUR SUSPICION THAT FONMIN AYALA AND THE MINISTRY MAY BE HURT BY THEIR INABILITY THUS FAR TO ARRANGE A BILATERAL WITH SECRETARY VANCE.
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